

THE Christian Messenger.

NO. 10.

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VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

(Continued from last Number.)

—“Ah! could the stunted mind Harbour the thought, that the Almighty's love, Life, and salvation, could to single sect Of creatures be confined, all his alike?”

THE prophet Isaiah speaks in his evangelical strain: “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” xi. 9.

“Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all this multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord God.” Ez. xxxii. 31. Here is the doctrine of him who says, Return, ye children of men. Hosea, also, “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God.” Hos. i. 10. “And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people, and they shall say, thou art my God.” Hos. ii. 23. How consoling this is!

Let us turn to the prophecy of Daniel, who tells us of the time appointed “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” ix. 24. Does not this savour of the doctrine of reconciliation?

Listen to the words of another of God's holy prophets: “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow into it, and many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us

his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” “Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Micah iv.

We pass by many other quotations in the Old Testament for the sake of brevity, and go to the New. This faith which had been preached to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, was proclaimed by the angelic hosts. The life of a shepherd was humble: proud science never usurped the independence of soul which ennobles man, neither had civilization enervated the body, nor debased the mind, yet, when the glory of the Lord shone around on men of this description, they were sore afraid. “And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” Luke ii. 10. Here was gospel proclaimed in purity. “Good (not bad) tidings to all (not some) people.”

John explains the extent of this gospel, “And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” Ye who have been blind in unbelief, imitate the conduct of the venerable Simeon, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Luke ii. 29—32. Some allege that this doctrine leads to licentiousness, encourages vice, that the idea of an eternity of woe, once removed, man would have full liberty to sin. My brethren, has not the denunciation of eternal misery been preached, and have the effects you

have stated, been prevented? Far, very far from it. Mankind are yet sinners. Our faith, it is true, does not deter from evil, by causing a dread of eternal punishment; we believe that perfect love casteth out fear, for fear hath torment; and “the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

This is the moral effect of the doctrine of universal benevolence. Its promulgators have read of what was done to the apostles, and are supported in their perseverance by their reward. For if the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory; and though persecuted we are not forsaken, though cast down, not destroyed. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

ABIUR.

—O—
FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

(Continued from last Number.)

WHEN the Church first assumed the right of dictating to the consciences of others in matters of faith, and claiming for herself the exclusive privilege of infallibility, she might not have been fully aware of all the evils to which it would tend. It might have been thought a necessary expedient, not only to do away the evils resulting from differences of opinion, but also to produce a uniformity of sentiment in the church: (a thing then considered to be very important:) little thinking that she was creating a power which should in its growth “oppose and exalt itself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in

the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. ii. 4. She did not, perhaps, foresee, that out of these pious attempts at uniformity (as she possibly might consider them) should arise a power, which would arrogate to itself the right, and assume the authority, not only to *absolve* sinners from all past offences, but also to grant *indulgences* to commit future crimes! A power, which should hold the consciences, if not the persons of men in abject slavery. A power, which, though claiming infallibility, yet, what it had decreed to be true and right at one time, could disannul and anathematise as damnable heresy at another. A power, to which, whenever, and in whatever way, it was disposed to *nod*, princes were bound to submit, and even kings and emperors, for a long time, durst not resist! No wonder that such a power (as such a power there undoubtedly has been) should at length become intolerable! And have we not abundant reason to be truly grateful to God, "who bringeth down the high tree, exalteth the low tree, drieth up the green tree, and maketh the dry tree to flourish?" Ezek. xvii. 24.

Laudable, indeed, were the efforts, as well as the fortitude of those who first broke this spell of darkness and superstition. But, alas! however well we may approve, and even applaud, their first attempts, unfortunately for their followers, each one seemed to suppose the reformation was complete, when it had, as it were, but just commenced.

Thus each rival sister, if I may so speak, having broken off from, and protested against a power no longer to be supported, set up in business for herself. And although they have laid aside many of the tinsels and unnecessary trappings of their proud mother; yet, in other respects, have they not dealt in the same kind of merchandise, and but too nearly copied her example? So that, having lost sight of her only true guide, the Church, (for so we may style Christians collectively of all denominations,) instead of having one head, is now distracted with many; each one crying out for himself, "Lo, here is Christ!" and each saying to his deluded followers, *Come hither: but go not thither!*

If the power depicted above is "the mother of harlots and the abominations

of the earth," Rev. xvii. 5. although she may have become decrepid with the infirmities of age, yet her daughters, *no more chaste than herself*, may be in the full vigour of life.

This, it may be thought by some, is rather too severe. But, observe, its greatest severity consists in the passage of scripture quoted above: the reader is at liberty to make his own application; and he is requested to apply it only where it cannot be misapplied. But certainly it must apply somewhere, either to something past, present, or yet future; or else the above passage, *printed in large capitals in all our common bibles*, is a false representation.

The above remarks are designed as an introduction to an extract from a sermon, "On the importance of mutual charity among the different denominations of Christians;" from 1 Cor. iii. 3, 4, 5, which I have taken the liberty to send you for publication in the Messenger. The extract, as you will perceive, is taken from a religious "Magazine," but the name you need not mention, as it is desirable that every thing in the Messenger should stand or fall by its own merit, and not by the name of its author.

CANDOR.

—O—

(Continued from last Number.)

The Improved Version is accompanied with the following explanatory notes which are here subjoined.

"[For] let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus also; who, being in the form of God,* did not esteem as a prey this resemblance to God:† but divested himself of it,‡ and

* "Being invested with extraordinary divine powers." Lindsey's Second Address, p. 288"

† "Did not esteem it a prey to be like God." N. The meaning is, he did not esteem this resemblance to God, these miraculous powers, as his own right, as a property acquired by his own exertions, and for the use of which he was not accountable. He regarded them as a trust committed to him by God, which therefore he was to exercise or to suspend as the purposes of his mission might require."

‡ "Made himself of none account," N. Gr. "emptied himself." Not that our Lord absolutely relinquished his miraculous powers, but he submitted to indignity and crucifixion, as though he were destitute of power to help himself. See 2 Cor. viii. 9. Being rich, he led a life of poverty. That our Lord's sufferings were perfectly voluntary, and that it was at all times in his power to have delivered himself, appears from John x. 18. Matt. xxvi. 53."

took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;§ and when found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."

It appears very evident to me that the mind or disposition of Christ, who thus humbled himself, and which the Apostle so ardently recommends to his brethren, was something supposed to be very apparent, and therefore the act or acts of humiliation must have been equally apparent; and hence this text ought not to be appealed to as proof of these facts. Now all this while it is very incompatible with the construction of T. is altogether in unison with the construction here given. That Christ was invested with divine powers, and yet did not exercise those powers in his own behalf were facts as apparent as any part of his life: but that he held the title of God before he was conceived by his mother, and emptied himself of that title, and the glory which was attached to it, thus condescending to be born of a woman, are facts (if they may be so considered) not so clear!

That the title *God*, is sometimes given to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and to Christ in the New, is not denied; but whether it any more belonged to him "after he ascended to heaven," than it did any time after he entered on his public ministry, will admit of a question; and whether the passage referred to, Rom. ix. 5, when justly considered, is any proof that this title belonged to him at all, is still more doubtful.

The readings of this text, according to Griesbach, are very various, and he conjectures that none of them are perfectly correct. I will take the same method which I did in the other text, to throw what light I can upon it.

Wakefield renders it thus; "whose were the fathers, and of whom was Christ according to the flesh; who is as God, over all, blessed for evermore."

§ "Of common and ordinary mortals" Lindsey. Christ invested with miraculous powers was in the form of God; but declining to use them for his own personal advantage, he appeared like any other frail and weak mortal. Judges xvi. 7. Samson says, "If they bind me I shall be weak, and be as a man; i. e., as our translators very properly supplied the word, as *another* man." See also verses 11, 17."

Im. Ver. thus; whose are the fathers, and of whom, by natural descent: Christ came. God, who is over all, be blessed for ever.*" See the note below.

The difference in the readings of the Greek consists principally in a different manner of printing; though some some copies transpose the words, and in others the word *God*, is wanting. Nothing, therefore, can be very decisively proved from a passage so doubtful as to its true reading, as the one now under consideration.

I am aware that some of the *craftsmen of Ephesus* will be alarmed that the idea should be suggested, that any of the scriptures are doubtful as to the true reading. But for them to contend otherwise, they might just as well shut their eyes, and contend that there is no light in the firmament. Truth never loses any thing by investigation. If any thing is stated which is not true, let them point out the mistake, and they shall receive our grateful acknowledgments.

R. C.

Answers to Quæstor.

1. The word *ghost*, is no more a correct translation of the Greek word *πνεῦμα* than the word *phantom*! neither is there any evidence in scripture that the *holy spirit* or spirit of God, is any more a distinct person in God,

* See Clark on the Trinity, No 539, and Mr. Lindsey's Second Address to the Students of the Two Universities, page 278. The common translation adopted by Dr Newcome is, "who is over all, God blessed for ever." But the translation of Dr. Clarke and Mr. Lindsey, equally well suits the construction. See Erasmus. In this sense, it is probable that the early christian writers understood the words, who do not apply them to Christ, but pronounce it to be rashness and impiety to say that Christ was God over all. The word "God" appears to have been wanting in Chrysostom's and some other ancient copies. See Grotius, Erasmus, and Griesbach. It is a very plausible conjecture of Crellius, Slichtinguis, Whitby, and Taylor, that the original reading was *ὁ θεός*, instead of *ὁ πατήρ*. This would render the climax complete, *ὁ πατήρ, ὁ υἱός, ὁ ἅγιος πνεῦμα, ὁ ἐκ πατρός, ὁ ἐκ υἱοῦ, ὁ ἐκ πνεύματος*, "of whom was the adoption, of whom were the fathers, of whom was Christ, of whom was God, who was over all." Nor is it likely, when the apostle was professing to sum up the privileges of the Jews, that he should have overlooked the great privilege which was their chief boast, that God was in a peculiar sense their God. See Dr. Taylor's note upon the text.

It may be here further observed, that this conjecture is perfectly analogous to the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 23; "all things are yours: and ye are Christ's: and Christ is God's."

than that the spirit of man is a distinct person in man. See 1 Cor. ii. 2.

2. The second queries are unanswerable. See page 19.

3. The doctrine of the Trinity never has been comprehended, though it is professed to be believed.

4. There can be no reasonable doubt, but that Christ means the same thing by *one*, when speaking of his disciples, that he does when speaking of his Father and himself.

5. "These three are one" cannot be found in the original scriptures.

6. "God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," is not bible language.

7. God is known in scripture by different names: but whether he be called God, Jehovah, Jehovah God, Father, Creator, Most High, &c. his name, like his nature, is *one*, and not three. He is no where in Bible styled Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

8 and 9. These must be answered in the negative. See page 28.

10. The anger of God, is the anger of his own nature, [LOVE,] which always manifests a displeasure against sin: and at the same time can forgive the returning sinner, without any other satisfaction.

11. Any being, who has it in his power at all times to satisfy himself, never need to be dissatisfied.

12. If justice can be satisfied with any thing which justice did not require; even that thing might also have been dispensed with.

13. If God has received a full and complete satisfaction for the "sins of the whole world," he has now no claim against the sinner on account of sin! but, if he requires the sinner to love him with all his heart, this love cannot be satisfied until it is obeyed.

14. The last question is unanswerable.

PROMPTU.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

No. I.

Sanctify the Lord God in your heart: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (as we beheld his glory, the

glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake. He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.

No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.

What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?

Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him; for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

I have many things to say, and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: he saw it and was glad.

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent unto the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.

Now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

ARELI.

Thoughts on Quæstor's Enquiries.

1. Q. asks, If the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father, why is it not commanded to pray to him?

The notion of equality of one with another must convey the idea of two distinctly separate beings, independent of one another, but in some respects equal. There is no equal to God the Father, who is declared by our Lord Jesus Christ to be the only true God. John xvii. 3.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God; not a being separate and distinct from the Father, which the notion of equality necessarily implies, any more than the spirit of a man is distinct from, and equal to the man himself. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God, to and through Jesus Christ. God is said to have given the Spirit to Christ not by measure. John iii. 34. to have anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit or power, Acts x. 38. and Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, shed forth those extraordinary gifts which astonished the Jews on the day of Pentecost. Acts ii. 33. The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles, Acts x. 45. &c. &c. These gifts of wisdom, knowledge, tongues, healings, &c. are incompatible with the idea of personality. This is the reason why our prayers are directed by the example and command of Jesus Christ, to be always addressed to the Father only, and never to the Spirit of the Father

separately. We are taught by Jesus Christ, John xvi. 23, not to pray to pray to himself, but to the Father in his name.

2. The Son never claims equality with the Father; but always worshipped Him, declaring the Father to be his God, John xx. 23. Rev. iii. 12. and that his life and all his powers were the gifts of the Father to him. That he is in every respect subordinate to the Father; being his Son and servant, is manifest from his own testimony in so many instances as not to require quotations.

That our Lord in the beginning was with God, and was God, I agree with the second answer in No. 5, but surely not out of his offices; for the title, God, is itself an official and relative title; expressive of the possession of divine authority, to rule, protect, restrain, and judge. While he was a minister of the circumcision he did not sustain the title nor form of God, but that of a servant. He emptied himself of the form of God when he took on him the form of a servant, Philip. ii. 7. After God had raised him from the dead, he made him both Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 36. restoring to him the glory of which he had emptied himself, giving him universal dominion.

3. The quotation from 1 John v. 7. in answer 3, No. 5, is considered by most of even the advocates for the Trinity, who have critically examined it, as not having been in the text before the fifteenth century. Luther, when alive, would not suffer it to be in his translation, but it was introduced into it about thirty years after his death; but supposing it genuine, it can only signify agreement in bearing record, like the spirit, and the water, and the blood. Not a word of being one person, or one God; on the contrary, both the old and the new Testament bear witness that the Father is the God of the Son. Psalm xlv. 7, or Heb. i. 9.

4. When Jesus says, John x. 30. I and my Father are one, it decidedly refers to unity in love and care for the sheep; for at the same time, he declares that the Father, who is greater than all, had given the sheep to him, verse 29th.

5. The fifth query answers itself. Jehovah is one.

Like Alehim, however, Jehovah

also appears to be an official title, applicable primarily to the Father, and derivatively to the Son. Compare Gen. xi. 7. with Isaiah vi. 5, and John xii. 41. From the scripture use of the name, it appears to be relative, and to denote the fulfiller of promise and threatening.

6. I do not believe that the advocates for the Trinity contend for more than one God, but they have adopted the notion of three persons in the Godhead which the scriptures do not teach.

T.

(Concluded in our next Number.)

“Presbyterianism versus Presbyterianism, or a candid review of ‘An Essay on the Inability of Sinners, by a Presbyterian.’ Also a pamphlet, entitled, ‘Natural Ability consistent with Moral Inability: being REMARKS on ‘An Essay on the Inability of Sinners, by a Presbyterian,’ by a Christian.”

By ABNER KNEELAND,

Pastor of the first Independent Church of Christ, called Universalist, in Philadelphia

NOTICE is hereby given that the above Review will be delivered in the Universalist Church in Lombard Street, on Thursday evening, the fourteenth instant, commencing at 7 o'clock; after which a collection will be taken up for the purpose of printing said Review; and books to the amount of the money contributed, will be put into the hands of the vestry, to be distributed gratis, at their discretion.

A piece from Mr. Gardner was put into our hands a week ago in answer to J. J. but on account of the conductor of the Messenger being unexpectedly called to the country, the communication has been omitted this week. It shall, however, appear in our next.

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